



00001

Slopbusting Special

Slop: Endgame.....	2
Alternative Consumption Channels.....	7
Back Issues.....	8
Tombstone of the Druid.....	9
Comments.....	10
Tracking.....	11
The Small Print.....	12

Slop: Endgame

It is a truth universally acknowledged that we now live in the age of slop, with barely an original opening sentence to be found on the high seas of generative derivation. But in this dark and stormy night, Lab 6 brings you hope. In this issue, let us inspect the problem and offer some solutions.

New scourge just dropped

Do you remember watching a movie and finding it well-plotted and quotable, with engaging characters and high cinematographic craftsmanship? Such experiences are rare in the age of LLMs, which can take colourful ground-truth and smooth it out into an optimised pre-approved beige. Instead of sharp originality, we get an endless parade of cash-grabby sequels like *Batman & Robin* (1997), *Friday the 13th Part VIII: Jason Takes Manhattan* (1989) and *Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End* (2007); yet more Marvel permutations, like *Howard the Duck* (1986), *Ghost Rider: Spirit of Vengeance* (2011), and *X-Men: Dark Phoenix* (2019); boring corporate garbage, like *Red Planet* (2000), *Gigli* (2003), and *Shrek the Third* (2007); and remakes that nobody asked for, like *Planet of the Apes* (2001), *Total Recall* (2012), and *The Karate Kid* (2010)? Thanks to AI's limitless capacity for generating passable material, even the good ideas get padded out into multiple movies just to score another ticket sale, like *Harry Potter 7 & 8*, and the three *Hobbit* films.

Do you remember movies with vibrant colour, before algorithms graded everything into teal and orange, as seen most notoriously in *Transformers* (2007)? The producers got a taste of what works, so they trained their system to copy it, and the punters kept coming back for more. Reinforcement learning from this human feedback led to a world increasingly defined by transformers.

Fans debate whether Hollywood's writing crisis was caused by the use of AI, or whether the writers turned to AI because they had already exhausted their creative capacity. However, it's hardly just the Hollywood studio system at fault here. Premium TV has also fallen to temptation, taking previously beloved properties and spinning them out into new seasons, far beyond the point where the story naturally ended, like season 5 of *Babylon 5*, the latter seasons of *The X-Files*, and season 11 onwards of *The Simpsons*. The content remains superficially plausible and locally coherent, but the heart and soul of the show can be felt only over a shorter, earlier context window that the model has long forgotten. Shows need never come to an end now, because by the time the original cast die off, there's enough training material to interpolate new performances.

But wait! The visual arts are not alone. Do you remember listening to music that wasn't produced from the legally-grey ingestion of other artists' materials, sampled and remixed, chopped and screwed, like *Weird Al*'s overfitting of *Coolio*'s diffusion of Stevie Wonder's *Pastime Paradise*? Whatever happened to the spark of original creativity? It's becoming hard to know what's original and what's derivative, and who deserves to be paid, in this crazy artificial world where *Marilyn Manson* can generate *Tainted Love* and nobody remembers that *Soft Cell* created the original. The consumers lap it up! Version after remix after cover! Even *The Beatles* sampled *La Marseillaise* in *All You Need Is Love*. Perhaps *Charlie Puth*'s *Attention* is all you really need.

00042 Grotesquely, even classic literature has not escaped the commercial pressure to overproduce for as
00043 long as the paychecks keep coming. **Charles Dickens** pumped out chapter after chapter of **The**
00044 **Pickwick Papers** to keep the fresh content streaming and attract new subscribers. **Alexandre**
00045 **Dumas** was paid 1.50 francs per line (about £0.06 per token) for **The Count of Monte Cristo**. Just
00046 imagine how marvellously *concise* these works might have been had they been produced for art's
00047 sake, not just to maximise revenue. It's downright offensive for content to demand so much of
00048 your time. Ain't nobody got time for **Marcel Proust's À la recherche du temps perdu** or 1,150
00049 episodes of **One Piece**.

00050 One theory of AI harm is that it threatens to *overwhelm* us with more content than can possibly
00051 be consumed, or even evaluated, or even enumerated.

00052 There is another theory which states that this has already happened.

00053 But seriously folks

00054 If everything is just a linear combination of everything that came before it anyway, what's the big
00055 deal? Slop has always been with us, right? Any student of the Star Wars prequels will encounter
00056 the argument that the existence of a bad thing doesn't negate the existence of a good thing. Well,
00057 unless we want to live in **The Library of Babel**, we're going to need a way to *find* the good
00058 amongst the bad. Easier said than done when the curation is *also* mediated by the slopvendors.

00059 So what is slop, anyway? [Wikipedia](#) gives the mainstream definition:

00060 *AI slop (also known simply as slop) is digital content made with generative artificial*
00061 *intelligence, specifically when perceived to show a lack of effort, quality or deeper meaning,*
00062 *and an overwhelming volume of production for content reasons.*

00063 Another definition is: **Slop is that which is served in a trough**. Specifically, an infinite-scroll
00064 crack pipeline of algorithmically selected low-effort decontextualised swill.

00065 Note the importance of the trough.

00066 Slop is not new. Content farms, spam, and SEO are from the now-
00067 gentrified, millennial era of slop, and further back there was
00068 daytime television, pulp fiction, and the penny dreadful.

00069 Generative AI is just the latest tool in the slop-pusher's toolkit,
00070 turning up the volume on what generations of grifters, hacks, and
00071 sales'n'marketing types have been doing forever. [Sturgeon's](#)
00072 [Revelation](#) was noted in the 1950s. No, slop by itself is neither new
00073 nor inherently harmful. *It's the feeding mechanism that you should*
00074 *be worried about.*



Figure 1: partial still from
tiktok.com, *Untitled, Undated*,
extracted c. January 2026, 260px
x 250px, JPEG on PDF.

00075 Slop trough apps play by casino rules: they don't want you to
00076 realise how long you've been at it. There are no page numbers or scroll bars, because there is no
00077 beginning or end. There is a vast library of content, with meticulous metadata-driven organisation
00078 that is maintained by, visible to, and for the benefit of, the app owner only. All *you* see is what's
00079 currently on the screen. The internet was supposed to be an Alexandrian astral library, with
00080 towering architecture, shafts of light, winding galleries, and Paul Otlet manning the card
00081 catalogue from beyond the grave. Instead we have created **The Library of Babel**, where all

00082 possible content is in there somewhere, but the best you can do is swipe next and hope it's not
00083 more random noise.

00084 Enumeration as orientation

00085 Assigning numbers to things is the most powerful and fundamental technique for organisation
00086 and analysis. Bookkeeping is older than literature.

00087 Enumeration provides:

- 00088 • **Unique identity:** item 1 is different from item 2
- 00089 • **Order:** item 1 comes before item 2
- 00090 • **Abstraction:** Items in the same sequence of enumeration implicitly share some relation or
00091 abstract quality

00092 Enumerated items can be referenced, compared, related, separated, classified, described,
00093 quantified, bounded. In short, *understood*.

00094 “God made the integers; all else is the work of man.” – Leopold Kronecker

00095 In UX, enumeration is fundamental to empowering and orienting users.¹

00096 Let's look at an example of enumerated content from the all-time champions of enumeration:
00097 railway enthusiasts.

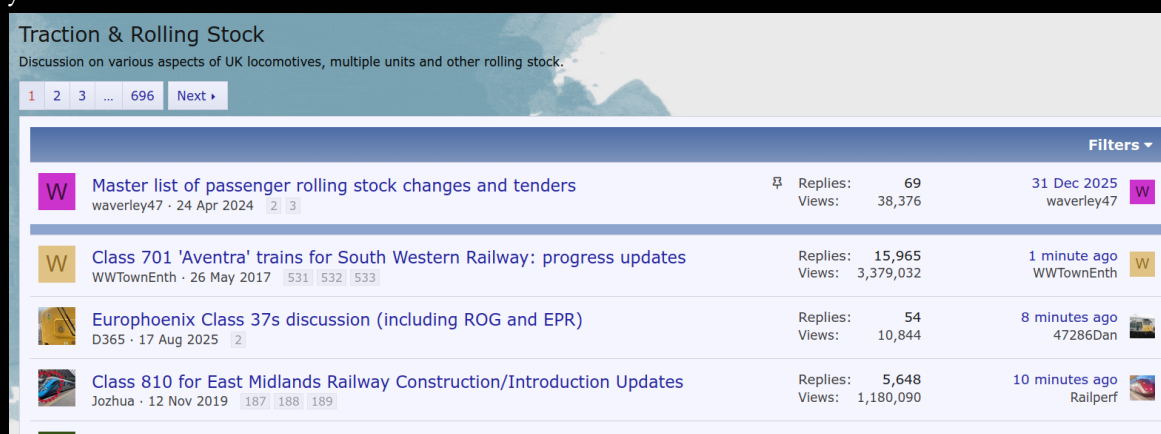


Figure 2: partial still from railforums.co.uk, *Traction & Rolling Stock*, 2005–2026, 1572px x 579px, JPEG on PDF.

00098 There is a wealth of navigational affordance arising from the enumeration of forum posts:

- 00099 • Thread replies are counted and paginated. *The numbers communicate a sense of scale and*
00100 *weight to each thread.*
- 00101 • The dates of first and latest post in each thread are clear. *Dates are just a numbering scheme*
00102 *for time. They help establish a sense of scale, spacing, and boundaries.*
- 00103 • There are 696 pages of threads. *The absolute size is transparent.*
- 00104 • There are links that may be followed to explore the hierarchical structure in which the
00105 content exists. *The user may choose a direction.*

1 This is also why slopquel movies drop their numbering scheme after a while:
<https://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/StoppedNumberingSequels>

00106 This is a classic Web 2.0 forum, driven from a relational database. You can tell. What is SQL for if
 00107 not to produce counts of enumerated items, and what are railfans for if not to love this?
 00108 Compare this to Tiktok:

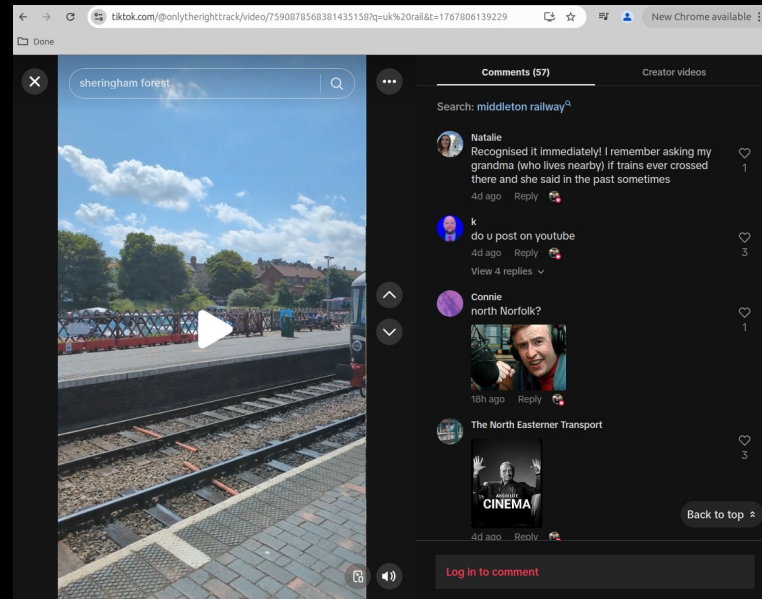


Figure 3: full frame still from tiktok.com, ???, ???, ?px x ?px, JPEG on PDF.

- 00109 • The video is not situated *anywhere* or *anywhen*. There might be a million others like it. The
 00110 “next” one might be nothing like it. There is no apparent structure in which it sits.
- 00111 • The user does not navigate. The user *is navigated*. The user is on rails.
- 00112 • The user is in a dark room, with no visible walls, and can see only what is immediately in
 00113 front of them.

00114 Was AI used to generate the content here? Does it matter? The *content* is not the problem. We
 00115 have seen that slop has always existed – with overwhelming quantity even before AI. The
 00116 difference is that as content becomes less identifiable, less ordered, less situated, and less
 00117 structured, it becomes harder and harder to sift the good from the bad. When robbed of the basic
 00118 tools of discernment, we become *disarmed* and *disoriented* and lose our agency. *We* used to be
 00119 agentic.

00120 It’s not the slop, it’s the trough.

00121 Call to action: the new testament

00122 Enumerate everything

00123 Put the numbers in order

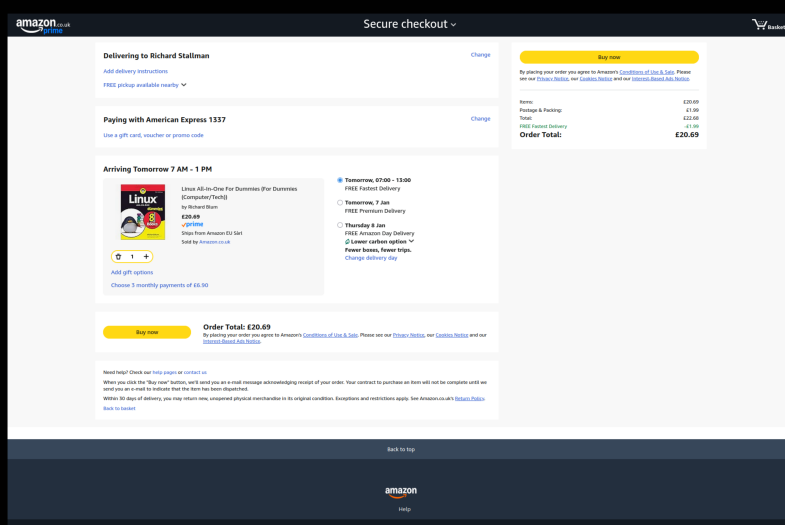
00124 Use the order to create structure

00125 **Side-quest: into the sales funnel**

00126 Let's take a slight detour and look at how Amazon.co.uk sells you stuff. Take
00127 a look at their current default allegedly-unpersonalised homepage on the
00128 right.

00129 Who knows if anybody ever runs the gauntlet of product categories in the
00130 middle rather than just hitting the search bar at the top, but it's clear that
00131 this is a website that has a lot to offer, and *really* wants you to find what
00132 you're looking for. It's overflowing with links and prompts and suggestions
00133 and navigational guff. Is it effective? Hundreds of billions of dollars of
00134 revenue says yes.

00135 Now compare it to the checkout page below. ↓↓↓↓

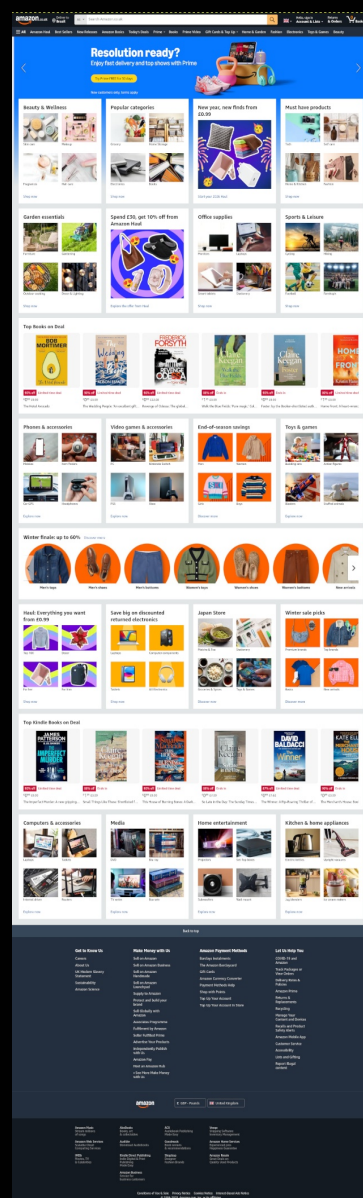


00136 The guff is gone. The navigation bar has been neutralised. The remaining
00137 links are there largely to support you clicking the Buy Now button, or for
00138 legal reasons.

00139 *It's laser focused on having you complete the purchase.* They don't want you
00140 going back, or anywhere else other than that Buy Now button. Engineers
00141 and analysts will have poured 'man-years into making *sure* your most likely next action is to click
00142 that Buy Now button. You are about to pass through the anus of the sales funnel, and they're
00143 pushing hard.

00144 This is all quite normal for a *shop*. Of *course* they're going to do their best to sell you stuff, and to
00145 Amazon's credit, it's light on dark patterns. Try buying a flight from Ryanair. By the time you get
00146 to the checkout page, you've already bought three other things. In fact, just by reading this
00147 sentence, you're booked on FR3238 to Belgium. Sorry about that. No refunds.

00148 The sales funnel and its horse blinkers are now in the dark pattern toolbox for any website with
00149 any kind of message to push. Just as the traditional e-commerce checkout page strips away
00150 distractions, slop-pushers strip away control and context. Purveyors of mystery meat focus on the
00151 sizzle, and hope you don't want to know what animal it came from.



00152

Alternative Consumption Channels

00153

Having said all that, we are pleased to announce that Lab 6 is now available on your favourite

00154

social media!

Issue 0		YouTube https://www.youtube.com/shorts/A4ankMqOpiE
Issue 1		Apple Podcasts (audio only) <i>coming soon</i>
Issue 2		TikTok https://www.tiktok.com/@lab6zine/video/7596349107053022486
Issue 3		X https://x.com/realLab6/status/2012636371098255769
Issue 4		Factorio https://mods.factorio.com/mod/pdf-documents
Issue 5		Instagram https://www.instagram.com/p/DToEVxIkYzH/
Issue 6		Nectarine https://scenestream.net/demovibes/song/50272/
Issue 7		GitHub https://github.com/lab6zine/lab6

00155

Back Issues

00156

00157

00158

00159

00160

00161

00162

00163

This document is certified as PDF/A-3b, does not process your personal data, and does not store any cookies anywhere. Its hexadecimal SHA-256 hash begins 0x08, identifying the issue number. It has no primary URL, but is available by sneaker.net. If you're reading this, you're already sorted. If you're not reading this, ask a friend for a copy.

When this host goes down, you may be able to find mirrors using this handy random 128-bit integer that appears in every issue:

250e3f7d581acff115537ba38e89ad31

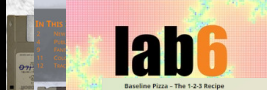
SHA-256 hashes & IPFS links for previous issues:



00c411fee9419cd861d9850dc56d53b7e6a211e90df9a1ca953e021b0cf31a56
ipfs://QmTAQJro5RmXXpsPbXPZFSAMQZY8Lpw69EskGaJZXTBrWp



0145df4ffcd382db238d1bc87c014013aa9cbc2298fe2a68fef09ca66cc99da6
ipfs://QmZHFELyJxRmzmjDdxoMBZaf4sa6hrxJhAuzUpP6DDV1Xy



0249500532346a546b8bb711755d9b1748d3a9593beeedba3b149554c58f6976
ipfs://Qmf1LPBTUunr57xPYbQSNXpnN5veQy9gJxr5G3K2bqSp1K



03dd114ba959819af097fe9800d31cd4cff581e69ab2b7161fc38ff1fc86a7e2
ipfs://QmdYUML4qjCMrh2q2qVNqzXB1VHwk3micP8eJfQUGBrdU



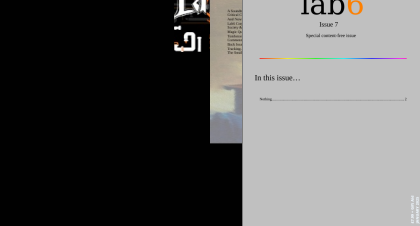
04eed398a3bf18f2a6049fde2a45afaaf44aec55a1c0f620c7ce387bfac3c354
ipfs://QmWD6MuBMRiQc2ipfdeNRzBFSYYPxpgcMuQthoZH5uRT1d



056e2a142f4246e0627c0c001c9462bb38b9d9ee2ef38a290f16eea4ffaec3b3
ipfs://QmQAqgYAwHtgVQXbZMdYnXa4CMh5nAmpM2aj3Hhu8jgNK2



0692f87523c3750727c1428b8d3f3733ede8d258181f0f4158f67e2c66596892
ipfs://bafybeih2c4bjdbaz7stzvqz4p3xpnbmtyjbiyeuyx5whuntr63liksjj3u



0757458f18beed9be89c3da15326091edd23bc82a3fd8db9614823512dc041ed
ipfs://bafybeih2c4bjdbaz7stzvqz4p3xpnbmtyjbiyeuyx5whuntr63liksjj3u

00164
00165
00166
00167
00168
00169
00170
00171
00172
00173
00174
00175
00176
00177
00178
00179
00180
00181

00182

Tombstone of the Druid

v0.8.0 Changelog

- NEW FEATURE: Version number decremented in accordance with radical candour policy, due to new features being a net detriment.
 - RISK: New version number may clash with previous version numbers. Accepted as low-impact, high-probability, to be reviewed at next planning session.
- NEW FEATURE: Typo prevention by introducing modal popup to confirm each keypress.
- NEW FEATURE: Modernised the game engine. Now requires more RAM.
- NEW FEATURE: Offline mode (still requires Internet connection to contact license server).
- NEW FEATURE: Dungeon level 17 is now DLC.
- NEW FEATURE: Deprecated NetBSD support.
- NEW FEATURE: Removed NetBSD support.
- NEW FEATURE: Premium support tier available for NetBSD users.
- PRIVACY ENHANCEMENT: All character names now hashed.
- FIX: No more gaps between grid-based and hexgrid-based map regions.
- NEW FEATURES: brand new levels, story arcs, characters, weapons, monsters, puzzles, graphics, and gameplay features that will make downgrading to this version practically mandatory.

Download link available after payment confirmation screen

00183 Comments

00184 Send your feedback to comment@input.lab6.com and it may be published in the next issue.

00185 Comments will also be mucked out of the social media troughs mentioned on page 7.

00186 Full names and email addresses will not be published, unless requested.

00187 Issue 6

00188 2025-02-16T22:18:00Z I hope you will find sponsors soon, but are you actively looking?

00189 ↳ **Lab 6 Official Response:** We are already sponsored by dark money sources whose interests
00190 will be revealed in the fullness of time.

00191 2025-02-16T22:31:18Z Please Launch the PDF club. It would be the official dark opponent of the
00192 PDF association. I'll join you and we would be two for few years in spite of active proselytism.
00193 Then, by the mean of very shady techniques, we take full control of the pdf world, and also
00194 become rich because Adobe would be under our thumb. Don't disclose my IP to local pdf
00195 authorities please.

00196 ↳ **Lab 6 Official Response:** User is not already in the PDF file. This incident will be reported.

00197 Issue 7

00198 2025-01-27T20:36:41Z I really enjoy this issue of lab6! Who could have guessed that a lack of
00199 content is exactly the kind of content we need.

00200 ↳ **Lab 6 Official Response:**

Tracking

OEIS entries	392,586
English Wikipedia entries (edits)	7,129,661 (1,331,158,661)
RC5-72 keys tested (% complete)	727,638,861,694,931,828,736 (15.408%)
Bitcoin blocks (hash)	934536 0000000000000000000000000592d70d3631d6f0393f2887704a5e55620f9aa07daf2
XKCDs	3,201
IPv6 adoption	48.49%
~~Abe Vigoda Status Page Status~~ Gone	But not forgotten .
Largest Prime	$2^{136,279,841} - 1$
BTTF Movies	3
World population according to the CIA	8,057,236,243
Latest stable Linux kernel	6.18.8
Color Names	4,434,258
Tilde Quilt entries	227
Count of University of Queensland pitch drops	9
Project Gutenberg eBooks	77,815
OCRemix Releases	4,806
Atmospheric CO2 ppm	428.22
Pantone Color of the Year 2026	

RIP [Jonathan Nash](#), January 2025, legend of games journalism
and origin story of semi-jocular whimsy. Or something.

00204 **The Small Print**

00205 With apologies to Gloria Jones.

00206 All content is licensed under <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/> except for the fair-

00207 dealt screenshots and logos.

00208 This issue contains nothing exotic. Best we can offer you for now is the OpenTTD font.

00209 **Commitment Scheme**

00210 For emergency use only

00211 885ea88922bc3b475be6fbe258ae90880b3545634426d48de6e3a312b7d76113

00212 37d8b259bebbb69d3e006f57f2e7ff03f4385aef859cef48d253688ed11d28f4

00213 343b362cfb8ceafebf21476b17e7c8695d82b837b47ba75a9b9449a554285e2e

00214 ad64f2437966d6d6458740db952a10c96091acd2578e400ba15f5c5cf13ae4a6

00215 28f8a0956289246599d0993ffa24870783bc4a862dfbe236553b39f8bc4708c6

00216 4877d2504959536a25cac0ef2810b87ae4c1e9ed60aa1d119d7364d238a51cf4

Longitudinal Storytime...

there